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IMPACT OF THE GUIDE SYLLABUS FOR TRAINING AT STPA CENTRES, OTHER TRAINING CENTRES AND STATISTICAL OFFICES

GUIDE SYLLABUS FOR IN-SERVICE STATISTICAL TRAINING

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I. Introduction

1. The paper is written with the purpose of discussing the impact of the guide syllabus for in-service statistical training prepared by the ECA Statistics Division, in the formulation or implementation of in-service statistical training programmes in National Statistical Offices of the African countries.

2. It should be noted that:

(a) The guide syllabus was approved at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres which took place in October/November 1983.

(b) There has not been sufficient time between the approval of the guide syllabus by the meeting of Directors and the time of preparation of this paper to allow countries to use the guide syllabus to its full advantage.

(c) Only a few countries in the anglophone African countries have implemented the in-service training programme following the guidelines discussed at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres. None of the francophone countries have implemented the programme using any of the guidelines discussed at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres.

(d) There was need to have full consultations with the countries which have implemented the programme in order to assess the impact of the guide syllabus in the improvement or implementation of the teaching programmes, but it was considered by the secretariat to be too early to conduct such consultations.

3. This being the case, it was decided by the secretariat to discuss the utilisation so far made of the guide syllabus and the possible utilisation of the guide syllabus in National Statistical Offices and other relevant institutions. The following topics are discussed in the paper:

(a) The guide syllabus for in-service statistical training.

(b) The in-service statistical training programme at National Statistical Offices of African countries.

(c) The utilization of the guide syllabus in the organisation of courses at National Statistical Offices and relevant institutions.

4. It is the hope that after a few more countries have used the guide syllabus in the implementation of their in-service statistical training programmes, the secretariat will be in a better position to discuss the impact of the guide syllabus in the implementation of in-service training programmes at National Statistical Offices.

II. The guide syllabus for in-service statistical training

5. The guide syllabus for in-service statistical training was prepared at the request of African National Statistical Offices which had asked for guidance on the organisation and content of in-service training programmes for middle level statistical personnel in their countries. It could be recalled that the main objective of in-service training is to improve the work performance of serving middle level personnel.

6. The first draft of the guide syllabus was prepared by ECA during 1982 and was based on in-service training courses offered by African National Statistical Offices. This was one way of ensuring that the guide syllabus reflected the needs and practices of National Statistical Offices.

7. The draft guide syllabus was circulated to all National Statistical Offices in Africa, United Nations statistical experts attached to countries, the United Nations Statistical Office, Statistics Divisions of relevant specialised agencies and bilateral organizations, the Institute of Statisticians and the Chairman of the Task Force on Tertiary and Technical Education in Statistics of the International Statistical Institute. Comments received were used to develop the guide syllabus which was presented to the Biennium meeting of Directors of STPA centres held in Addis Ababa from 31 October to 4 November 1983.

8. The guide syllabus for Portuguese-speaking African countries was prepared by a Portuguese consultant during 1984. The guide syllabus was prepared to suit the countries of the group and to be adapted by individual countries in the implementation of in-service statistical training.

9. Details on the in-service statistical training guide syllabus can be obtained from document E/ECA/STPA/DM3/12 presented at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres. The guide syllabus for Portuguese-speaking African countries is available as a separate document.

III. The in-service statistical training programme in African countries

10. It may be recalled that at the second and third sessions of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers and the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres, the question of middle level training for statistical personnel was emphasized. It was stressed that the existing training centres should be maintained and developed and that countries should gradually set up permanent structures for in-service training inorder to meet their needs for an increasing number of statistical personnel. It may also be recalled that at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres, there had been extensive discussions on practical ways of encouraging African National Statistical Offices to implement the recommendations on in-service statistical training.

(a) Missions to African countries

11. Missions on in-service statistical training were undertaken by staff of the STPA project and those of the Statistics Division, ECA to selected African countries during 1984 and 1985. The missions had the following objectives:

(i) Reviewing the current status of in-service statistical training programmes;

(ii) Discussing plans for improvement or introduction of in-service statistical training programmes;

(iii) Discussing possible assistance which ECA can provide within the framework of STPA.

12. Missions to the African countries and the dates of the missions are given below:

Year	Country	Date of mission
1984	Ghana	June 28 - July 10
	Liberia	October 20 - October 26
	Zambia	October 31 - November 7
	Zimbabwe	November 7 - November 14
	Mauritania	November 15 - November 21
	Mali	November 22 - November 30
	Niger	December 1 - December 5
1985	Sierra Leone	February 4 - February 11
	Gambia	February 11 - February 16
	Nigeria	February 16 - February 23
	Mozambique	March 5 - March 16
	Central African Rep.	March 19 - March 30
	Gabon	March 30 - April 8
	Congo	April 8 - April 14
	Uganda	May 7 - May 16
	Rwanda	June 7 - June 19

It should be mentioned that all the missions to countries were undertaken to the National Statistical Offices. The mission to Mozambique was undertaken with the purpose of advising the government on the implementation of in-service statistical training and also drawing up a project document for the establishment of a statistical training unit within the National Statistical Office. The assistance to Mozambique is part of the special assistance to the Portuguese-speaking African countries within STPA which the project has been providing.

(b) In-service training: ad-hoc versus continuous (formal) training

13. It can be argued that ad hoc in-service statistical training programmes have been conducted by the majority of African National Statistical Offices, since these offices were established. The continuous (formal) in-service training programmes are a new development to most National Statistical Offices. The ad hoc in-service training courses are usually conducted inorder to satisfy specific objectives i.e. conduct of a census or a survey, and are usually of a seminar or workshop type. The continuous (formal) in-service training courses conducted in National Statistical Offices aim at upgrading the skills of the participants to the level of a certificate in statistics as provided by the STPA training centres.

14. Countries which have implemented in-service statistical training programmes as discussed at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres, the type of training course followed, date the training programme started and the present status of the

training programme are detailed below:

Country	Type of training course	Date training course started	Present status of training programme
Ghana	Beginning 1984 sandwich course	1960's	Discontinued around 1966; to be re-started 1984
Nigeria	Formal (full-time)	1962	Continuing
Zambia	Formal (full-time)	1975	Continuing
Mauritius	Part-time, few hrs. per week	1977	Ended 1980
Liberia	Daily part-time	1980	Expected to continue when University re-opens
Zimbabwe	Daily part-time	1982	Continuing
Tanzania	Daily part-time	1982	Continuing

15 Four types of in-service training courses have been described in the guide syllabus for in-service statistical training (document E/ECA/STPA/DM3/12 of the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres). The type of courses are (i) daily, part-time, sandwich, formal and daily release. The daily release type of course is likely to be adopted by Gambia while the daily part-time course by Sierra Leone in their implementation of in-service training programmes. This information was obtained during the missions to the countries which were undertaken by the secretariat during early 1985.

(c) Institutional arrangements for the training courses

16. There are several options which have been chosen by National Statistical Offices. The options are as follows:

(i) A training school with separate premises from the National Statistical Office. The school will have full-time teachers who are employees of the National Statistical Office, one of the teachers will be the principal of the school. This school will be located within a short or a long distance from the National Statistical Office depending on availability of space in the vicinity of the office.

(ii) A training school with premises at the National Statistical Office. The majority of the professional staff of the office will have part-time teaching duties at the school while a few designated officers will be assigned full-time to the school.

(iii) A training school organised in collaboration with a nearby institution i.e. college of administration, a university etc. The college or university will normally conduct its own courses and the statistics courses would be taught jointly by staff of the college or university with the National Statistical Office staff teaching the majority of the practical courses.

(iv) A training section would normally be established in the National Statistical Office with full-time staff. The head of the training section would in general be a statistician and would report to the Director of the National Statistical Office or the Deputy Director on all matters relating to the training school.

(v) The certificates for success at each level of the course are in general provided by the government and only in cases where an institution i.e. college or university is handling the programme in collaboration with the National Statistical Office will the certificates be issued by that college or university. The recommendation that by special arrangement with STPA centres, the certificate could be that of a centre is yet to be seen to be operational. None of the countries which have implemented the in-service training programme have a working arrangement of this nature in terms of certificate of success in the course(s).

(d) Incentives provided to trainees

17. It will be recalled that the main objective of in-service training is to improve the work performance of serving middle level personnel. However as indicated in document E/ECA/STPA/DM3/3 of the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres, if this objective is not linked to career development with well defined promotion outlets most in-service schemes fail to achieve their primary objective due to the general apathy of the trainees. It should be mentioned that in a number of African countries especially those of French expression, salaries are closely linked to qualifications.

18. The missions which visited the African countries during 1984 and 1985 observed the following practices which are adopted by the countries, as incentives for the trainees, who undertake courses on in-service training conducted by the National Statistical Office.

(i) Certificates obtained through the training courses are taken into account during promotion exercises.

(ii) When considering training abroad, the performance of the candidates in the in-service training programme is taken into account.

(iii) The training courses are incorporated into the scheme of service of the National Statistical Office and success at each level leads to the promotion of the individual.

(iv) A salary advancement is provided following success in the training course.

(v) The trainee is given more responsibility over other junior staff following success in the training course.

(e) Arrangement of courses

19. There are three stages which have been adopted by the countries in the training courses. These stages are all covered in the guide syllabus for in-service statistical training. The stages are as follows: (i) preliminary, (ii) stage one and (iii) stage two.

20. The preliminary stage is generally meant for those who reached the "O" level standard but have no passes in English (or French) and mathematics or for those below the "O" level standard. This stage of the course is sometimes referred to as a remedial stage before proceeding to stage one of the course. In some countries even those who have "O" levels in mathematics and English (or French) but fail the entrance examination to stage one, have to pass through the preliminary (remedial) stage. This is also true of candidates with no recent "O" levels.

21. Stage one is generally meant for those who have recent "O" levels with passes in mathematics and English (or French). In those countries where an entrance examination is administered, they must pass the entrance examination in addition to the "O" level passes in English (or French) and mathematics.

22. Once the trainee has entered the preliminary stage and performed successfully he or she would normally proceed to stage one on the basis of end of stage examination. The same applies for progression from stage one to stage two.

(f) Trainers and course materials

23. The choice of trainers for the in-service training programme conducted at the National Statistical Office should be considered carefully. Most of those appointed as trainers have the academic knowledge of the subject but may not have the skills to do the teaching. In a few statistical offices those with previous training as teachers in schools have been recruited to join the statistical office with the intention of utilising them to teach in the in-service training programme. The training of trainers may be a solution to the problem but ways and means of training the trainers have to be found.

24. The course materials for the trainers also need to be considered carefully. In a few African countries, these are prepared by either experts or consultants who come to the country and prepare materials suited to the local conditions. STPA centres could play a role in this area of course materials. Most of the trainers are either unable to prepare their own materials or do not have the time to prepare these materials. Originally ECA intended to develop these materials but due to budgetary constraints, ECA is unable to do so.

(g) In-service training: French-speaking African countries

25. In the French-speaking African countries, as explained in paragraph 2(c) of this paper, the in-service training programme as discussed at the third meeting of Directors of STPA centres, has not been implemented. The countries have implemented middle level training at National level. The certificate and diploma courses are covered in this programme. The courses are conducted either at the National Statistical Office or a specially chosen centre in the country. The establishment of links

between the STPA centres and the middle level training centres is yet to be developed. During the 1984/85 missions which were undertaken to the French-speaking African countries, information on the dates the programme started or is supposed to start in each of the countries was obtained and is as follows:

Country	Date middle level training started	Date middle level training supposed to start
Niger	October 1984	-
Central African Republic	-	October 1985
Rwanda	October 1983	-
Congo	October 1983	-
Gabon	-	October 1985
Mali	-	October 1985
Mauritania	-	October 1985

IV. The utilisation of the guide syllabus

26. There are two types of guide syllabuses for in-service statistical training which have been developed. These are the guide syllabus for the English- and French-speaking African countries and the guide syllabus for Portuguese-speaking African countries In describing the utilization of the guide syllabus, it is necessary to distinguish between the current users and potential users of the guide syllabus. These are as follows:

(a) National Statistical Offices conducting in-service training courses.

(b) National Statistical Offices intending to conduct in-service training courses.

(c) Others: STPA centres, bilateral and multilateral agencies, individuals etc.

27. The National Statistical Offices currently conducting in-service training courses intend to utilise the guide syllabus in the following areas:

(a) Improvement or modification of their course contents which were formulated before or after the guide syllabus was prepared.

(b) Adaptation of parts of the guide syllabus which may not exist in the syllabus of the course.

28. The National Statistical Offices intending to conduct in-service training courses are likely to utilise the guide syllabus in the following areas:

(a) Adaptation of the guide syllabus to suit the requirement of training programme in the country.

(b) Planning the training course in such a way that the level reached by the trainees is that of a certificate in statistics as offered by STPA centres offering middle level training. In this case, the guide syllabus will become very useful.

29. Other users: STPA centres, bilateral and multilateral agencies and individuals. A description of the way the guide syllabus is likely to be utilised is as follows:

(a) STPA centres are likely to utilise the guide syllabus in the implementation of any collaborative arrangement which may exist between a National Statistical Office and the centre in terms of in-service training programme.

(b) The Bilateral and multilateral agencies are likely to utilise the guide syllabus as a model in mounting in-service statistical training programmes in African countries.

(c) Individuals are likely to utilise the guide syllabus when requested to advise or recruited as consultants in the planning or conduct of in-service statistical training at national level. The preparation of course materials or manuals for teaching in the in-service training courses will be greatly facilitated by the guide syllabus.

30. With regard to the guide syllabus for Portuguese-speaking African countries, it should be mentioned that Mozambique is planning to use the guide syllabus in the implementation of its in-service training beginning early 1985. Also a consultant has been recruited by ECA, beginning May 1985, to assist two Portuguese-speaking African countries in the implementation of their in-service statistical training. The countries are Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea Bissau. In these two countries the guide syllabus prepared for the Portuguese-speaking African countries will be adapted to the conditions of the countries.

V. Conclusion

31. The guide syllabus for in-service statistical training was prepared to assist National Statistical Offices in the implementation of in-service statistical training courses. Modifications are expected to be made to the syllabus by the countries to suit local conditions. It is hoped that the performance of the middle level supporting staff at national level would be greatly improved through the in-service training programmes.

32. The meeting of Directors of STPA centres is invited to advise on:

(a) The assistance to National Statistical Offices in adapting the in-service training guide syllabus to suit their local conditions.

(b) The involvement of STPA centres in the implementation of courses conducted at National Statistical Offices.

(c) How to reward those who successfully complete the in-service statistical training programme.